



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Vermont Agency of Transportation seeks Corps permit to place fill material for rail crossing of Otter Creek in Pittsford

**CONCORD, Mass.** – The Vermont Agency of Transportation is seeking a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct work in waters of the United States in conjunction with construction of a new rail crossing of Otter Creek in Pittsford, Vermont.

The applicant proposes to place fill material in a total of 2.45 acres of Otter Creek and adjacent wetlands in conjunction with the construction of a new rail crossing, approaches, and rail siding just upstream/south of the existing Vermont Railway Bridge 219 crossing of Otter Creek in Pittsford.

The proposed project will involve the construction of a new two span structure about 60 feet upstream of the existing bridge. The new structure will be located upstream in order to maintain rail traffic during construction. A new rail siding will be installed adjacent to the south side of the new railbed within the footprint of the area used for construction access for the new bridge.

The project will temporarily impact about 0.03 acre of river bottom (below ordinary high water) and 0.62 acre of wetland, and permanently impact about 0.1 acre of river bottom and 1.7 acres of wetland. The wetland to be impacted is a forested floodplain wetland that functions primarily to store and desynchronize floodwaters, maintain water quality, anchor the shoreline, and provide wildlife habitat.

This rail line is Vermont Railway's primary north-south corridor and handles a relatively high volume of rail traffic. The site is directly adjacent to the Florence rail spur; thus, nearly all of the OMYA's product is transported over the existing bridge enroute from their Florence processing facility. Given the amount of rail traffic using this crossing, closing this section of the rail line such that the bridge could be reconstructed on existing alignment is not feasible. Construction of a temporary detour would involve similar impacts to those currently proposed. Several alternatives to the proposed siding configuration and to the bridge and approach locations were also considered and rejected due to safety and operational factors.

In an attempt to mitigate for the unavoidable impacts of the project, the applicants propose to vegetatively enhance and preserve in perpetuity an adjacent 17-acre parcel that abuts the project and Otter Creek.

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## **Vermont AOT seeks Corps permit/2-2-2-2**

The application for the federal permit was filed with the Corps of Engineers in compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, which regulates the discharge or fill of material in United States waters, including wetlands.

The Corps public notice, with more detailed information on the proposed project, can be reviewed online at the Corps website <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil>. Select Regulatory/Permitting and then weekly public notices and search by file number or state.

Public comments on the Corps permit review (File # NAE-2006-761) should be forwarded no later than Dec. 9, 2010 to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Vermont Project Office (ATTN: Marty Abair), 8 Carmichael Street, Suite 205, Essex Junction, Vermont 05452. Additional information is available from Permit Project Manager Marty Abair at 802-872-2903 or 802-872-2893 or by email to [martha.a.abair@usace.army.mil](mailto:martha.a.abair@usace.army.mil).

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